



Connecticut Farm Bureau Association
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Testimony in Support of: Raised Bill No. 297 AN ACT CONCERNING AN OFF-SITE WINERY SALES AND TASTING PERMIT and Raised Bill No. 5425 AN ACT CONCERNING THE SALE OF FARM BRANDY

Submitted by: Henry N. Talmage, Executive Director, Connecticut Farm Bureau Association

The following testimony is submitted on behalf of the Connecticut Farm Bureau, a statewide nonprofit membership organization of over 5,000 families dedicated to farming and the future of Connecticut agriculture.

Senator Doyle, Representative Baram, members of the General Law Committee,

The Connecticut Farm Bureau is supportive of the emerging Connecticut wine industry. In many ways the wine business serves as a model for other forms of value-added agriculture and agri-tourism. It serves as a great example of how local producers can engage consumers while creating products and experiences that highlight our agricultural resources. Our hope is that as the Connecticut wine business continues to mature, the number of acres dedicated to growing fruit for wines and brandy will become a significant use of our agricultural land base.

The Connecticut Farm Bureau supports Raised Bill No. 297 AN ACT CONCERNING AN OFF-SITE WINERY SALES AND TASTING PERMIT. This bill would authorize the Commissioner of Consumer Protection to issue an off-site wine sales and tasting permit to holders of a manufacturer permit or a farm winery. This would allow farm wineries to offer free samples and sell wine by the bottle at up to seven fairs and other off-site events per year. This is a great way to expose consumers who attend special events to Connecticut wines and allow them to purchase the wines they taste. It also allows wineries that participate in special events to sell their products and generate income that they cannot realize under current law.

The Connecticut Farm Bureau also supports Raised Bill No. 5425 AN ACT CONCERNING THE SALE OF FARM BRANDY. Under current law the holder of a manufacturer permit for a farm winery can produce brandy on-site and sell it from their winery. This bill would allow holders of a manufacturer permit for a farm winery to sell "brandy manufactured from grapes harvested on the premises of such farm and distilled off such premises". By adding this language to the existing law it will enable wineries to sell brandy made from their fruit at their wineries even if it is distilled off-site. This important change will allow wineries to get into brandy sales and expand their product offering without having to invest in very expensive distillery equipment. We would like to see the words "and fruit" added after the word "grapes" on line 62 so that other fruit brandy can be included in the bill.

Connecticut Farm Bureau Association - *The Voice of Connecticut Agriculture*